

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
August 8, 2011
7:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING

PRESENT: **COUNCIL MEMBER ROXANNE M. BURNS
COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH M. BUTLER JR.
COUNCIL MEMBER TERESA R. MACALUSO
COUNCIL MEMBER JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR GRAHAM**

ALSO PRESENT: **MARY M. CORRIVEAU, CITY MANAGER**

City Staff Present: Gene Hayes, Ken Mix, Andrew Nichols, Kurt Hauk, Doug Osborne, Barbara Wheeler

1. Research and Development Plan for Creation of Outdoor Skating Opportunities

Mr. Osborne discussed his report with Council. He advised that he had spoken with Mr. Hayes, Mr Van Brocklin and Mr. St. Croix and learned that outdoor rinks were not being utilized in the past due to lack of visibility and people's awareness that they existed.

Mr. Osborne explained that Thompson Park has been a mark of interest to many as a potential location for an outdoor rink. In addition, the fairgrounds location would also be a viable site due to the amount of year-round activity there. He discussed the various ice options such as the standard flood and freeze method or the use of artificial ice.

Council Member Smith remarked that he was speaking of the coolant system ice mats which are sold by such places as Davis Mechanical in Syracuse. Council Member Smith advised that these systems are composed of a rubber mat or the more expensive ones are the rollout systems with tubing. He also remarked that there are too many swings in temperatures in the winter to keep standard flood and freeze ice in place. He stated that he had been talking about a used matting system when he asked for information on this. He asked if there were any dasher boards left from before.

Mr. Hayes responded that he didn't think we had any left.

Mayor Graham suggested that we find out about the market for this type of ice prior to buying anything. He also asked if there was a reason for renewed interest in outdoor skating.

Mr. Osborne explained that Mr. Van Brocklin and Mr. St. Croix indicated that there had been a change in demographics. People remember the outdoor rinks of their youth.

Council Member Smith commented that the City hasn't had outdoor rinks in over a decade.

Mrs. Corriveau commented that there are two facilities with year-round rest rooms – Thompson Park and the fairgrounds. The park's facilities are inside the zoo proper.

Council Member Smith responded that the bath house at the park is heated.

Mr. Hayes advised that the water could run there year-round. At one time, the City put all the winter activities, including the rinks, into a single budget and chose Thompson Park for a central point to bring everyone into. The City wanted to rent or checkout snow shoes and cross country skis. A furnace and hot water tanks were put in the pool house at that time. For many years prior to that, the City had been unsuccessful in running an outdoor rink. The neighborhood rinks of the 1940-s and 50's were at the school athletic fields. Knickerbocker was the last one and was the most popular. However, Mr. Hayes explained, the City couldn't maintain the numbers and that is why they moved it to Thompson Park.

Mayor Graham asked if there was a constituency that wanted to use outdoor rinks.

Mr. Hayes commented that there is always a need for old fashioned- where you skate outdoors and have hot chocolate. He explained that this would offer an opportunity for everyone to be able to have ice time as the average skater doesn't get to use indoor ice for more than a few hours a week due to the blocks of time purchased by hockey and figure skating. He stated that by offering this, we are looking out for the average family.

Council Member Smith commented that there is a big demand in terms of people wanting to get out on the ice. He advised that Sackets Harbor plows off the harbor and holds hockey games on it and it is packed.

Mayor Graham responded that once the harbor is frozen, it will hold up for a long time. He commented that outdoor skating seems to be less formal.

Mrs. Corriveau commented that wherever you make it available, there has to be skates available to rent.

Council Member Smith referred to pickup hockey games that he participated in years ago.

Mr. Hayes advised that these games are dangerous and there had to be supervision at the Knickerbocker ice in the past.

Council Member Smith advised that these games were usually after school, with the night being for more family skating.

Mrs. Corriveau also advised that there were attendants at the rinks that kept the snow off and the rink iced down.

Mayor Graham asked if Council wanted to try it and if so where.

Council Member Macaluso commented that kids used to be able to walk to the rinks. Now, they would have to be driven.

Mayor Graham responded that it doesn't seem like fond memories of our youth play out in modern days.

Council Member Smith stated that if the City is going to do this, we should purchase the inexpensive second hand mats to try. He stated that he wouldn't suggest dumping a huge amount of money on this until we find out if it works. He suggested perhaps a 100' x 50' mat.

Mayor Graham asked if there is a site for this at the fairgrounds.

Council Member Butler asked about the area out in front of the fairgrounds, parallel to Coffeen Street.

Mr. Hayes advised that the City has a new basketball court area. It would be the shortest distance to where you could rent skates. The court could be flooded, it is near the skates and the staff of Parks & Rec could watch it. The area is also lighted.

Council Member Smith stated that it was a good idea.

Mayor Graham agreed.

Mr. Hayes explained that this would give us as chance to see if people would come to it.

Council Member Burns commented that this would be a nice way to start out and to see the public's reaction.

Council Member Smith stated that the information could also be posted on the City's website.

Council concurred to use the basketball court as an outdoor skating rink.

2. Application for an EPF Historic Property Preservation & Planning Program Grant

Mr. Mix and Mr. Nichols presented the proposal to the Council advising them that applications are due September 1st and asking if Council was interested in applying for this year's round of funding. Mr. Mix advised that the library's marble has become quite dark from dirt accumulation over the years.

Mayor Graham asked about the fountains.

Mr. Mix advised that they hope to get them done before the grant projects would be done. He explained that the grant process is a 3-4 year one. The fountain project is on Mr. Hauk's list to do.

Council Member Butler asked what needed to be done with the fountains.

Mr. Mix advised that the basins need to be redone.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that the objective is to have them up and running by spring time.

Council Member Burns referred to the section of the memo which refers to the marble becoming dark. She commented that she was concerned about the library's façade before and had asked Mrs. Corriveau several times and she in turn, had been working with Mr. Mix on it.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that this was correct and it is included in the budget.

Mr. Mix advised that the marble has gotten darker, due to dirt that attracts more dirt and algae growth.

Council Member Burns asked if that was what the professional who had visited had determined.

Mr. Mix stated that the individual did indicate that it was dirt. While, algae wasn't specifically referred to, the green color would indicate that this is what it is.

Council Member Burns asked if the City had ever tried to clean it, perhaps with a power washer.

Mr. Mix advised that a power washer is not recommended.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the custodial staff did some work on the lions and had to use soft brushes and running water. It did work to some extent. However, she is not sure that we will ever get the lions back to the way they were.

Council Member Smith asked if local monument companies might have an idea.

Mr. Mix stated that he would contact them. However, most monument companies don't work on cleaning marble.

Council Member Butler asked who would be writing the grant.

Mr. Mix advised that Mr. Nichols would be.

Council Member Butler suggested that Mr. Nichols capitalized on the architecture of the building and he should emphasize that in the grant application.

Council concurred to apply for this funding.

3. Lease Agreement – State Street Parking Lot

Mayor Graham asked if there was any thought on the advantage of acquiring the lot from the owners.

A discussion was held on the small parking lot on Union Street.

Council Member Burns remarked that there aren't more than 10 spaces in that lot.

Council Member Butler advised that there wasn't signage before so no one knew it was there. However, with the signage in place, it has helped.

Council reviewed the outline of the City lot and privately owned lot as shown in an aerial photograph.

Mayor Graham commented that it looks like one large City lot and the cost isn't that great. He also is aware that the people who own it need parking for their tenants.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that they are paying taxes. However, the City does reimburse them as per the lease agreement.

Council Member Butler stated that this is a net zero amount.

Mayor Graham asked if Council wanted to seek a change and asked if the property owners had been contacted.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that she hadn't reached out to them yet as she wanted to know what Council wanted to do.

Council Member Burns remarked that there is some merit to reaching out to the owners. However, she is not ready to commit either way. She stated that the Mayor brought up a valid point. She advised that this lease agreement was reached when the Marcy Building was being renovated as part of a blight reduction and the lot was re-done. She commented that the owners may not be interested at all.

Council concurred that Mrs. Corriveau should contact the owners for discussing available options.

4. Status of Eddy Street

Mayor Graham commented that it sure looks and smells like a regular street and asked if it should be one.

Mr. Hauk advised that there were two properties developed on Eddy Street. They had received agreements one in 1968 and the other in 1982 to install water and sewer at their own costs, off of

Breen and Boon. The 1968 license agreement had the provision that if the City installed a sewer on Eddy Street, the City would agree to accept the street.

Council Member Macaluso asked if the same people live there that were there then.

Mr. Hauk stated that he didn't know.

Council Member Butler asked what the City did to Eddy Street during the Breen project.

Mr. Hauk advised that they did just enough work to tie into the existing street, matching the curbs, etc.

Mayor Graham stated that the City plows it and asked if the property owners would have to pay for a repaving of it.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that they would.

Mr. Hauk advised that Moore Alley is a small street off of Moore Avenue. It is currently being repaved and as a private street, the costs are paid by the property owners.

Council Member Butler asked why the City plows Eddy Street.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that they do so for fire and police protection.

Mayor Graham asked what would be involved in making it a City street.

Mr. Hauk advised that the City would have to accept the street, like they did in Summit Woods.

Mayor Graham asked why this street became an issue.

Council Member Butler remarked that one of his constituents was displeased with the look of the street after Breen was done.

Concerning the fact that the exact ownership of the private street is undetermined, Council Member Burns stated that it would be simple enough to ask the City Assessor to check his records.

Mayor Graham commented that we never determined who owned Palmer Street. He commented that he wished they could find a way to get through the Palmer Street mess.

Mrs. Corriveau also asked if the City allows people to run private laterals under City streets.

Mr. Hauk, referring to Eddy Street, explained that there is a manhole and an 8" sanitary sewer that goes back far enough off of Boon to allow the two houses to tie into it.

Council Member Smith, referring to Palmer Street, commented that one of the impediments is that Mr. Battista owns it.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that she would have to pull the file on the research that was done concerning Palmer Street.

Mayor Graham remarked that if we were committed to taking the street, we would just take it, probably through eminent domain.

Mr. Hauk advised that the City can't take Palmer as a dedicated City street as it doesn't meet City Code.

Council Member Macaluso asked if we couldn't fix it so it does.

Mr. Hauk responded that there has to be work done on it.

Council Member Burns commented that there aren't a lot of areas in the City where single homes are being constructed. New parcels have cropped up on Palmer. She commented that she doesn't believe that the people building these homes are sitting back and saying it isn't a dedicated City street. She remarked that it is almost devious on our part in that these folks don't realize that it is not a City street.

Mayor Graham stated that he thinks the City should acquire it.

Council concurred in looking at both Eddy and Palmer Streets to make them dedicated City streets.

Council Member Butler asked how the City takes ownership of a street if the ownership is undetermined.

Mr. Hauk responded that he would call Attorney Slye.

Mayor Graham commented that Council is the visionary and paid staff is here to find ways to make it happen.

5. Snow Dump Platform Reconstruction Project

Referring to the report on this project, Mayor Graham commented that he was surprised that the DEC allows the plan for dumping into the river.

Mr. Hauk advised that he thought the City might need a SPEDES permit. However, as long as it is considered a snow dump platform, no permit is required from DEC as they have no jurisdiction for that.

Mayor Graham asked if there was an open field where the snow could be dumped.

Mrs. Corriveau commented that all storm water would go into the river anyways.

Mayor Graham asked if this project is the best way to do it and asked about a timeline for it.

Mr. Hauk advised that, if approved, it would probably be built next spring or summer.

Council Member Butler asked how many permits were purchased by private haulers.

Mr. Hayes advised that in 2008-09, 34 trucks purchased permits. In 2009-10, 39 trucks were permitted and in 2010-11, there were 32 trucks issued permits. He advised that it is \$125 per vehicle for the first 4 vehicles. Therefore, the maximum charged is \$500.

Council Member Butler asked how much the City is using it.

Mr. Hayes advised that the City has 4 tandem dump trucks. The City hired Clement per hour after putting it out to bid. A front end loader is used and the four trucks pretty much work around the clock.

Council Member Butler remarked that it sounds like a lot of money to dump snow and asked what other options would be available.

Mr. Hayes stated that the City could purchase the mobile heaters which are extremely expensive. Another option might be to dump it somewhere such as the City Center Industrial Park and Rail Drive. He commented that from a theoretical point of view, it seems like that would work. However, the iron rail, which the driver backs up to, is not just for safety reasons but it allows the load to dump as it is popped by the truck backing into it.

Mayor Graham asked what would happen if the City continues to use this during the upcoming winter.

Mr. Hayes advised that they would avoid the deteriorated area this winter. He also commented that he thinks with the number of trucks using it now, the platform that was rebuilt in the 1990's is really solid.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that we would have to start the design work now and the project would be in the budget next year, if approved.

Mayor Graham asked Mr. Hayes if he didn't think the other ideas for getting rid of the snow were worth pursuing.

Mr. Hayes remarked that what we have is the best.

Council Member Butler commented that the shoot makes it like a slide. He questioned why we would spend money on a shoot when the snow is just going to melt anyway.

Mr. Hauk advised that while there is no DEC requirement for the dumping of snow, they do have to approve the construction.

Council Member Butler stated that he is not going to spend \$100,000 on a shoot.

Mr. Hauk responded that as it now exists, it will just continue to erode.

Mrs. Corriveau commented that this is a project that started in the 1940's and now it needs work.

Council Member Butler commented that he can see shoring up the concrete.

Mr. Hauk explained that the concrete is basically eroding away.

Council Member Burns referred to the photos of the area and remarked that she can see the erosion and asked what would happen if the erosion continues.

Mr. Hayes advised that we would lose the platform. He also advised that near the warming area, there is movement in the bank that we never had before.

Council Member Butler asked if they could drill steel beams down to support the platform.

Mr. Hauk stated that this is essentially what is being proposed.

Council Member Smith asked if the City plows the Veterans' walkway.

Mr. Hayes stated that the City keeps it open.

Council Member Smith wondered if the City could use Newell Street to back up and to plow it down the walkway and then bring in a snow blower to blow it into the river.

Mayor Graham questioned how unsightly that would be.

Mr. Hayes responded that they could try a sample of it this winter using City vehicles.

Council Member Burns commented that Council Member Smith's suggestion is worth trying but questioned if the walkway could handle the truck traffic moving in and out.

Mr. Hayes reminded Council that the walkway used to be a street.

Mayor Graham remarked that he is a little concerned about the entrance ways.

Mr. Hayes responded that the ornamental fencing is a bigger concern to him.

Mayor Graham commented that he understood the concept of the proposed reconstruction project.

Council Member Butler stated that he isn't on board with it.

Council Member Smith stated that he would have to think about it.

Mr. Hauk advised that this is basically a bridge abutment and they have to be replaced every so often.

Mrs. Corriveau asked if Council wanted Engineering to move forward with the design.

Council Member Butler responded that we have more pressing needs.

Council Member Smith responded that he would rather see the man hours go to other things.

Mayor Graham responded that staff is saying that if we are moving ahead in the future, we need to have the designs in place.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that this is correct as the permit process takes about 4 months.

Council Member Butler remarked that if the City moves ahead with this project, they should charge more for the permits to use it.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that staff did propose higher fees before and Council lowered them.

Mayor Graham commented that we should move ahead with the design.

Council Member Butler remarked that this could be more than \$100,000. He asked what the cost of the concrete was.

Mr. Hauk commented that these are pre-design numbers. He stated that he would have to look up the figures. However, most of the cost is in labor.

Mr. Hayes advised that the concrete costs for the foundation of the Acrow bridge were shocking.

Council Member Macaluso stated that we can't ignore big things like this and would go along with the design.

Council Member Burns and Mayor Graham agreed.

Council Member Butler commented that he liked the giant shoot idea but is against the project.

A majority of the Council concurred to move ahead with the design.

6. Infrared Roof Moisture Survey, Municipal Ice Arena

Mayor Graham commented that the Bernier Carr report recommended replacement of the roof as there was water in there.

Mr. Hayes responded that he is amazed that the south side of the roof is in good shape and the north side is in terrible condition. He advised that he had spoken with Mr. Franklin and the best answer is to replace the roof. However, there is room to breath in that there is time to come up with a plan. He also commented that if we pull off the entire roof, that is when we should look at doing the other things that need to be done there.

Mayor Graham asked about the fire suppression system.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that it was in the capital budget.

Mr. Hayes stated that it is not going to leak next week or next year.

Council Member Smith responded that he has been down there and there are buckets all over the place. He stated that this report makes sense as to where the buckets are found.

Mr. Hayes stated that the roof is not leaking. The high winds cause the rain water to come in through the vents.

Council Member Smith stated that it is not just on center ice. He has seen the buckets near the zamboni area.

Council Member Butler asked if they were talking about roof 1 or 1 and 2.

Mr. Hayes responded that it was both 1 and 2. He also advised that this is an acre of roof.

Council Member Smith remarked that one of the problems was the insulation.

Mr. Hayes stated that Mr. Franklin made a recommendation as a result of the infrared analysis. Mr. Hayes remarked that the moisture in the roof is much more severe than he had anticipated.

Mayor Graham asked what Mr. Hayes recommended.

Mr. Hayes commented that Mr. Franklin thinks we can go 2 or 3 years without any major impact. He also advised that it would take 3 to 4 months to put the roof on during which time there couldn't be any activities at the arena.

Mayor Graham commented that this would require design work. He stated that there are a lot of things down there that need work. He stated that he gets complaints about lack of and conditions of the restrooms as well as insufficient concession areas.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that there would have to be a financial plan put together to pay for all of this.

Council Member Smith commented that this is probably the most utilized building in the City in terms of year-round use.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that she has real concerns about what is going to happen to borrowing rates for municipalities in the future.

Mayor Graham commented that we need to have our eyes wide open when working on this plan as we are probably talking \$2 -\$3 million.

Mr. Hayes remarked that in the years past, we have looked at perfect sequential phases. Now, we have to make a decision.

Mayor Graham commented that nobody is dragging their feet on this. But, it should be fixed in concrete with the correcting of the glaring deficiencies down there. He stated that it would involve a bond issue and would be way into 7 figures. He asked how the City gets the planning process going.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that it takes funding. If Council wants staff to get a plan together, the City would have to hire someone to do that. We don't do building, we do infrastructure. The City would have to put out an RFP to hire an engineer who would look at the Bernier Carr report and use it as a corner stone to begin with.

Mr. Hayes remarked that the Bernier Carr report was based on the facility being used for the same functions. However, if Council is looking for the most functionality out of the arena, then we have to look at someone who has gone in to similar facilities and done it before.

Council Member Smith commented that Watertown does have first class ice.

Mr. Hayes commended Mr. Van Brocklin and staff for that.

Mayor Graham stated that we are a City of 27,000 and we have to find a way to take this facility and use it for a range of activities. We have to make the best use of it that we can. He stated that there should be restrooms and adequate concession areas and a good roof.

Council Member Smith remarked that we should look at the number of teams that want to come here.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that one of the first things is to get the new management team in place. Civil Service is meeting next Tuesday to consider the job descriptions and then the City can advertise.

Mayor Graham asked if Mr. Casale had been here.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that he had been.

Mayor Graham commented that if Council decides that a beer concession is a good idea, it should be served in a responsible manner. He stated that this would be the same for the food concessions and the restrooms. He stated that nothing can happen quickly enough for him. However, we have to make sure that we do it right.

Pool Report

Council Member Smith asked about the status of the pool report.

Mr. Hayes advised that they have the draft but not the final report. Mr. Van Brocklin has talked with the engineers when they were here taking final photos. Mr. Hayes explained that the basis of the reports is that it is there contention that the City should have a spray pool in Thompson Park as well as keeping the pools in Thompson Park and the fairgrounds. He also commented that they would recommend closing the Flynn pool which has no problems. He said that he advised that it would be hard to get consensus to close this north side pool.

Regional Economic Development Council

Mayor Graham advised that he was asked by Governor Cuomo to serve on this Council and felt that it was important for the City to be represented on it. He stated that this will involve many meetings and he is hoping that it will be productive.

Work session ended at 9:03 pm.

Donna M. Dutton
City Clerk